

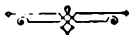
# TRUE . . MANHOOD.

(Exo. i. 1-14 ; ii. 1-10.)

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By P. R. MORFORD.

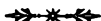
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# TRUE MANHOOD.

(EXO. I. 1-14 : II. 1-10.)



**T**HERE is a peculiar charm about Old Testament history, and it may be looked at in three ways : first, as history, divinely-recorded history of the most wonderful events, as well as of the lives of persons in which the bad deeds are chronicled equally with the good ones ; because God is faithful and all comes sooner or later under His government.

Then in the Old Testament we have not only history but

prophecy; it tells us of things that will be, and we learn that all the great periods will have to be lived over again, though not perhaps in separate events, but there will be the Moses period and the Elijah period.

Thirdly, we have to consider the moral application of the Old Testament to ourselves, and this shews us how we can be formed in view of the Lord's appearing.

In Exodus God takes a people typically out of the world. He was taking them, according to history, out of Egypt, so God has a people to-day, and He is going to take them out of the world. Thus you see this part of history is to be lived over again, for God is going to take

Christians to Himself. The moral application is that we should live in the light of what He is going to do; we ought to be in the power of it in the midst of a world out of which we are shortly to be taken.

I want more particularly to take up the moral side; Egypt in Exodus is different to Egypt in Genesis. Pharaoh was but the title of all the kings of Egypt. In Exodus Egypt was no longer a home for the Israelites. There had arisen another Pharaoh who knew not Joseph, and Joseph was dead, too. In Joseph we get a beautiful picture of how God will govern this world when Christ is in power, when He will administrate the whole

thing ; how He will deal with the years of plenty and the years of famine ; how He will gather up and administrate everything in a way which no one has ever been capable of doing. There are no Josephs to-day ; if there were one, he would manage as no man else could.

Now this Pharaoh in Exodus is looked upon as a type of the prince of this world, and when it comes to be repeated, Satan will put forward *the beast*, the head of the Gentile nations ; he will oppress the people of God, and God will have a controversy with him until he is crushed.

God will raise up two witnesses, who will come in the power of Moses and Elijah.

We stand to-day between the history and the fulfilment of the prophecy of the Old Testament, and the way in which it affects us is in the presentation of God to our souls.

Our great difficulty is to know how to face things at the present moment. We cannot face them except as we see the power in which God will intervene in the future. Merely knowing scripture will not help us. Do not think I depreciate knowledge of scripture. I say read it and dwell upon it; make a point of reading it; look at all scripture, do not leave out anything, not even the genealogies; read it through sometimes, but always look for Christ in it. I believe every jot and

tittle to be inspired of God. But the *mere* knowledge is no good. We read of seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, who tried to make use of the name of Jesus, but the devil rejoined, "Who are you?" They had no power. Knowledge of God Himself is the only power, and knowing Him will give us to understand how He will intervene by and by.

God's people had come to Egypt by His permission, but they forgot God; they got away from Him and became reduced to a nation of slaves to the prince of this world, yet God knew every one of them. Then we get an insight into the actings of the prince of this world with regard to these people. He gets

anxious as to what will happen. He sees they have nothing in common with his people, and here comes a remarkable thing. He calls a council ; he says (ver. 9), "Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we." I would say for the encouragement of young Christians, we may be afraid of the world's power, but I ask you to consider, Which do you think is the more afraid : is the world more afraid of you or you of the world? The world is more afraid of Christians than Christians are of the world. These Israelites had had neither drilling nor training, they were sunk in degradation and misery, and yet Pharaoh had to confess, "more



and mightier than we." Where Christ is in power the world is more afraid of us than we are of the world. Our position is very similar, analogous. You may think if you had to appear before tribunals that the world is master. True, you must go in humility, but if God is with you, you are in power and the world in weakness. I am not speaking against government—one is very thankful for government—but I am speaking of the world as it is under Satanic influence.

Pharaoh says, What is to be done? We must deal wisely with them, and curb them and bind them to us. Therefore it says, "They made their lives

bitter with hard bondage." "And they built for Pharaoh treasure cities." So now the god of this world would use God's saints to build up the greatness and wealth of this world; his aim is to make us contributory to that.

Then Pharaoh takes another step, and he issues an order by which he intends to curtail their manhood. He commands that all the men-children be cast into the river. So to speak, the man portion, the virility, what belongs to manhood, was to be put in the place of death.

In scripture you may trace how God intervenes for His people. Satan always expected the advent of the Man-child,

for the moment sin entered into the world, God had pronounced in His judgment that the Seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head, though he would bruise His heel. So he must have been on the look-out for the Man-child, and at this crisis, when God was about to intervene for His people, Satan tells this king to slaughter all the men children. The Man-child points to Christ. In Revelation you find the "man-child" mentioned—"a son, a male." It is put in that way to shew the power of manhood, manhood in its strength, a Son, a male, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron.

Now in this Book of Exodus

Moses is a remarkable type of that Man-child. I do not want to look at Moses merely as a historical type of Christ: he is that, but we also see in him the way we may lay hold of Christ in our affections.

It is in the "man-child" that God will intervene and bring down everything that exalts itself against Him, and secure deliverance for His people. As we lay hold of Christ in that character we shall be formed here in power for God. Further on in the book we find how we may treasure Christ in our souls in days of pressure, and how we may be strengthened to be here for God. Has Christ become so dear to your heart that you

would rather have Him and refuse everything here? The christian pathway is the acceptance of martyrdom. The very thought of baptism is that. You are baptised in the symbol of the death of Christ—baptised for the dead in order that you may follow Him into death. Every one baptised is to fill the rank of the martyrs.

Christ was not a hero. We admire heroes among men, but that is not Christianity according to the thought of God. A hero is too small for a Christian; heroism would bring glory to the man, but the other brings glory to God. Taking this passage as an illustration we can trace Christ coming here as a

Man, and the way in which He is formed in our hearts.

In spite of this prohibition of Pharaoh to keep alive any man-child, two of the tribe of Levi, acting in faith, marry, and a son is born.

The point here in Moses' history is that you are brought into the apprehension of Christ as the Man-child. But the moment you are identified with the One the world hates, you are hated, and the world hates Christ. (John xv. 19.) You may speak of Almighty God with impunity, but if you bring in Christ enmity is aroused immediately. If we are true to Christ we are true to a rejected Christ. When Mary actually bore Christ it was said

to her, "A sword shall pierce through thy own soul." The One to whom she had given birth must die. That is what will subdue us, and Christians ought to be subdued; they ought to have nothing of religious pride about them, they should be of the lowliest and humblest, and far from seeking any religious position.

Moses' mother saw that he was a goodly (beautiful) child, and she hid him. Moses as a beautiful child is a type of Christ. Christ was beautiful to God; truly "his Christ," perfect Man, Man in all the magnificence of manhood according to the divine thought of man. I would impress on you what perfect man-

hood is in the thought of God. Every boy would admire a hero—his culminating idea is to be a hero. God forbid I should speak against heroism. I admire it in its sphere, but it is not God's sphere. Being small and despised is to be for God here, and truly that is magnificent. God will exalt the one and put down the other. One will last for ever, and the other must go. According to the divine thought manhood is lowly and submissive to God, and seeks that which will abide for ever. I would like to occupy you with true manhood. It is found in Christ and only in Him.

When you read of Moses'



failures, if you care to pursue them, you will see how we fail in our apprehension of Christ.

Now faith realises that God will intervene. Moses' mother saw that he was a goodly (beautiful) child, fair to God, and she hid him for three months. It is a wonderful thing when a soul receives the light of Christ, the One who is beautiful to God. Those three months are a period morally suggestive of the distance of death. It is there that we apprehend Christ, or rather where Christ takes hold of us.

The very first incident in Luke xv. marks the point where we see the activity of a divine Person. The shepherd takes the sheep and lays it on his shoulders

rejoicing. He puts two legs across each shoulder and grips them both, and what room is there for shifting or even struggling? We want Christ to get hold of us. Have you gone morally the three months' journey? Moses' mother hid him from the gaze of the world. Then came a moment when she could hide him no longer, and I want to press the way faith acts; it acts with regard to our apprehension of Christ. She took for him an ark of bulrushes. She must have made it herself. Bulrushes grow in the river—the place of death. They are of no use to lean on, they are absolutely weak. She made for him an ark, a sheltering-place, and

she daubed it with pitch to keep out the water. The word pitch means a covering, it is exactly the same word as atonement, the same meaning, atonement means a covering. Here we have a beautiful picture of Christ going into the waters of death for us. He was our covering. It is atonement that covers me, but when we come to the New Testament we have reconciliation, which means that God could not put up with you and me, and we are removed; that is more than covered. We get the waters of judgment rolled back by the death of Christ. Do you know the rolling back of the adverse element?

Now notice again the way

in which faith acts. The woman takes this ark and she daubs it with slime and pitch, and lays it in the flags by the river's brink. The bulrushes do not grow in the stream.

There are those who think faith is testing God. The devil recommended that to Christ when he suggested "Cast thyself down" and shew how much you trust God. Had this woman thought thus she would have thrust the ark into mid-stream. God forbid; that is not faith. She put it where it would be hidden and out of the current. Some push their children out into the world and say, "He will float all right." This mother laid her son among the flags.

It ought to be a lesson for us. God forbid that we should not confess Christ, yet there should not be a high-handed parading of our faith, but a lowly confession of a *rejected* Christ. "The words of the wise are heard in quiet."

Now it states, "his sister stood afar off." They do not say, We have done everything, and we will leave it. The mother does not leave the child by the river's brink and go home. No, faith watches, faith expects God to intervene. Faith expects intervention, do you? or do you think to take matters into your own hands? Further on we see the same lesson, "Stand still, and see the salvation of the

Lord." "His sister stood afar off, to wit what would be done to him." And God intervened in a remarkable way. He brings Pharaoh's daughter on the scene—it is extremely interesting; the link of faith is preserved in Pharaoh's daughter, and God uses that woman in the very face of Pharaoh. She comes to wash at the river, and her maidens walked by the river-side. Supposing Moses had been pushed out into the stream, he would have been entirely outside divine intervention. When this princess saw the ark among the flags she sent her maid to fetch it. She opened it and saw the child. There was no outward show—faith makes no parade.

The first thing she saw, the first presentation of the man-child is, "the babe wept." You may say, That is not a mark of manhood, but it is according to God. The babe wept, and she says, "This is one of the Hebrews' children." She knew it because the babe wept. The babe was in sympathy with the sorrows of Israel. It was not the last tear that he wept. He identified himself with the sorrows of Israel. Christ is presented on that line; He identifies Himself with the sorrows of His people.

Later, Moses did not choose the greatness of Egypt. He refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; he chose to suffer with the people of God.

It brings before us the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord's deep sympathy. The Lord could and did weep in sympathy with His own. In Hebrews ii. we get, "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same." Not as a fellow-sharer. He did not come on that line. "He took part of the same" in *holy manhood*. He brought in what was new and holy for God, and still there was no outward pomp, so that men could say, "That is a God." Though "in the likeness of sinful flesh," He was outside all that was fallen or unfallen; true manhood according to God was found in Him, "The babe wept."



Now there was the little maid, Miriam, waiting to take advantage of God's intervention, and when the moment came she knew how to act ; it was faith ; she was watching. Trace how beautifully she acted. There is the royal princess, her maids around her, and yet this little girl raises no difficulty, she is neither nonplussed nor abashed in approaching royalty. She manages to get near, and she simply says, "Shall I go and call to thee a nurse ?" She does not say a word too much ; she does not unfold any secret, does not expose the position ; she does not delude the princess. It was just the simplicity of faith. "Shall I go and call to thee a nurse ?"

It is in this answer to faith that Christ gets possession of our hearts, He takes hold of our affections, and if we are waiting for God's intervention, difficulties will be nothing. It is wonderful to think of the child approaching an Egyptian princess. And she calls the child's mother.

Were this fiction and not fact, people might say it was overdrawn, but God records it to shew His providence. Faith is on the watch to see how providence will be subservient to His will. To-day God is working that Christ may be endeared to our hearts, that He may become everything to us.

Think of the Apostle Paul ; a man who might have had every

worldly advantage, but who accounted it all dross to win Christ. If Christ takes possession of our hearts what a witness in subduedness and lowliness we may be before men.

Noticethat Pharaoh's daughter says, "Take this child away": it was so entirely God's providence. There was no affection, or she would not have said, "Take this child away."

You see how faith places the child in the very place of death. Some might have said, Place the child on a pyramid top. No, the mother places it in the waters of death, and the water was a resting-place for the child. His death is the eternal link that binds us to Him. Pharaoh's

daughter gave Moses his name ; it means "drawn out," a name divinely given through God overruling her mind, in view of what He would do through His servant. The people were "drawn out" by divine power, and in result "the man Moses was very great."

This is what Christ will be when He comes forth in judgment. *God's judgment* is past ; Christ will be the Judge in the future. "Authority to execute judgment" is given to Him "because he is the Son of man." A Man will judge and rule this world in righteousness.

The point is, does that Man rule in your heart to-day ?

God had to bring these people

through the greatest pressure that they might appreciate Moses. They had to make bricks, and were given no straw to make them with. Pharaoh would use them as clay in his hands to build his palaces; they learnt the character of their taskmaster, but they also learnt the mercy of their God. So to-day God allows pressure to come upon us that we take up christian privileges, and if we are Christians we need to see the reality of a rejected Christ. Christ, the Man-child forms the object for which we have surrendered everything. Are you prepared to die for Christ? Men are prepared to die for their country. But for Christ? We

are baptised for the dead and Christ.

It is no flaunting of our faith in the eyes of the world, but a quiet submissiveness in a scene from which Christ has been rejected. Seize the opportunities God gives you in that way. God must make quiet in men's souls, and as Christ is appreciated in our hearts now, then Christ will be admired in all them that believe in that day.

May it be so with us.

P. R. M.

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